

UNTITLED COUPLES PROJECT

“Pilot”

Written by

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TEASER

SCENE A

FADE IN:

INT. TAXICAB - NIGHT (NIGHT 1)

(BEN, MADDIE)

A COUPLE HOPS IN -- MADDIE AND BEN -- IN THEIR THIRTIES,
ATTRACTIVE, STYLISH, AND CLEARLY IN LOVE.

BEN

(TO CABBIE) India's Grill on 2nd
Ave. at 6th. And can you crank up
the heat? She gets a little cold.

MADDIE

And I'm sorry but could you turn
off the sports radio? They'll say
something bad about the Giants and
then he'll have to call in and yell
at "Bill from Trenton".

BEN

(OPEN WOUND) They just started so
strong...

MADDIE

(SYMPATHETIC) I know, baby, I know.

CHYRON: MADDIE AND BEN -- TOGETHER NINE YEARS.

CUT TO:

INT. ANOTHER TAXICAB -- SAME TIME (NIGHT 1)
(CASEY, MIA)

ANOTHER COUPLE IS IN THE BACK SEAT -- MIA (20'S, CHIC,
STRONG-WILLED) AND CASEY (20'S, LAID BACK, BOYISH).

MIA

(TO CABBIE) India's Grill on 2nd.

CASEY

Oh, we're having Indian?

MIA

Yeah, is that okay?

CASEY

It's just there's this spice that's
in every Indian dish that makes me --

MIA

("I'M WITH YOU") Overeat?

CASEY

Go into anaphylactic shock.

CHYRON: MIA AND CASEY -- TOGETHER SEVEN AND A HALF WEEKS.

CUT TO:

INT. TAXICAB - SAME TIME (NIGHT 1)
(BEN, MADDIE)

MADDIE

My sister's crazy about this guy --
says he's totally different from
guys she's dated before.

BEN

I got a real good feeling about
him. He's a keeper.

MADDIE

You're just sick of being saddled
with her every time we go out.

BEN

Do you know how hard it is to try
and buy concert tickets for three
people? It can't be done!

MADDIE

I know you want this to work but
don't come on too strong and scare
him off. Do you think you can play
it cool?

BEN

How do you think I got you?

MADDIE

You hounded me day and night until
I agreed to go out with you.

BEN

(WINKS) But in a cool way.

CUT TO:

INT. ANOTHER TAXICAB -- SAME TIME (NIGHT 1)
(CASEY, MIA)

CASEY

I know how close you are with your
sister. I hope she likes me.

MIA

Oh, just be your normal, wonderful
self. It's how you got me.

CASEY

(A BIT SURPRISED) Did I get you?

MIA

(SMILES) Big time.

HE LEANS IN TO KISS HER.

CUT TO:

INT. TAXICAB - SAME TIME (NIGHT 1)
(BEN, MADDIE)

MADDIE

I really feel for Mia. Those awkward first few weeks when you're hoping you've found someone, but you're terrified they'll turn out to be a creep, and you can't relax because you want to seem perfect. Nothing but worry and stress.

BEN

I'm so happy to be done with that.
New relationships suck.

CUT TO:

INT. ANOTHER TAXICAB -- SAME TIME (NIGHT 1)
(CASEY, MIA)

MIA AND CASEY ARE NOW PASSIONATELY MAKING OUT.

CASEY

Complicated bras suck.

FADE OUT.

END OF TEASER

ACT ONE

SCENE B

INT. RESTAURANT - NIGHT (NIGHT 1)
(BEN, CASEY, MADDIE, MIA, WAITRESS)

MADDIE AND BEN CHECK IN WITH A WAITRESS.

MADDIE

Hi, reservation for four, under the
name Coles for eight o'clock?

WAITRESS

The rest of your party is at the
bar. The table will be ready in a
few minutes, Mrs. Coles.

MADDIE

Oh. (RE: BEN) No, he's Mr. Coles,
but I'm not Mrs. Coles. We're not
married.

WAITRESS

(MORTIFIED) Oh my God, so sorry.

MADDIE

(GENUINE) No, no, don't be.

THE WAITRESS MAKES A FACE, STILL WORRIED SHE'S STEPPED
IN SOMETHING.

MADDIE (cont'd)

For real. There's no need for the "sad eyes". Neither of us wants to be married. But we love each other, we're committed, very happy. Let me see your eyes again.

THE WAITRESS LOOKS AT HER.

MADDIE (cont'd)

Still sad. Show me your "happy for the committed couple who made a choice" eyes.

WAITRESS

(AWKWARD) It will just be a minute.

THE WAITRESS MOVES OFF.

BEN

That'll teach her for not having a table ready.

MADDIE

(OFF CELL PHONE) I just got a text from Mia. (READS TEXT) "Here. Where R U?" Why does that need to be texted? We said we'd meet at 8. I don't get this generation's need for constant communication.

BEN

You're only six years older.

MADDIE

But it's a big six years. None of
the famous people her age wear
underwear.

THEY MAKE THEIR WAY TO THE BAR.

MADDIE (cont'd)

Okay, so remember you're gonna be
cool and for my part, I'm not gonna
say anything critical.

BEN

(PULLED UP) You're not? Then what
are you gonna say?

MADDIE

I will admit that in the past I
have been guilty of... overstating
my opinion as it relates to my little
sister's choices. But I have decided
that I am going to be supportive.

BEN

("YEAH, RIGHT") Great. Then I am
going to be a black woman.

MADDIE

(LOOKS AROUND) I don't see them.

Let's just grab this booth.

THEY SIT ON ONE SIDE OF A BOOTH. AFTER A BEAT, A COUPLE
POPS UPS FROM UNDERNEATH THE TABLE ON THE OTHER SIDE OF
THE BOOTH, MAKING OUT AND OBLIVIOUS. IT IS CASEY AND
MIA.

MADDIE (cont'd)

(SCANDALIZED) Mia!

MIA AND CASEY BREAK APART, A LITTLE EMBARRASSED.

MADDIE (cont'd)

Um, hello? This is a public place!

MIA

You two, coatroom, cousin Beth's
wedding? Your impressionable baby
sister walked in?

MADDIE

You were twenty-three.

MIA

Our brains are like sponges at that
age. (DEEP BREATH) Okay, I'd like
you to meet -- (NOTICES CASEY HAS
LIPSTICK ON HIS NECK) after I give
him a quick bath.

SHE DABS A NAPKIN IN HER DRINK AND CLEANS HIM UP.

MIA (cont'd)

This is Casey! This is Ben and my
sister, Maddie.

EVERYONE SHAKES.

CASEY

(RE: BEN'S GRIP) Whoa. Strong
shake. (TO MIA) Better watch what
I say around him. Tough guy.

BEN LAUGHS, EMBARRASSED AND FLATTERED.

BEN

("AW, SHUCKS") Tough? I'm not
tough. I mean I work out a little.
(TO MIA) I love this guy.

MADDIE

(TO BEN, SOTTO) Way to play it
cool.

BEN PULLS HIMSELF TOGETHER. THE WAITRESS APPROACHES
WITH MENUS.

WAITRESS

Your table is ready. Right this
way... people whose situation is
very, very good.

THE WAITRESS STARTS TO LEAD THEM AWAY. MIA AND CASEY
FOLLOW. MADDIE HOLDS BEN BACK.

MADDIE

(QUICKLY, RE: CASEY) His hair's
too long, way too much cologne, and
that leather bracelet? (EXHALES,
RELIEVED) Okay, just had to get
that out.

THEY FOLLOW THE WAITRESS AND WE...

CUT TO:

SCENE C

INT. MADDIE'S LAW OFFICE - NEXT DAY (DAY 2)
(MADDIE, CLIENT, ASSISTANT, CASEY)

WE ARE IN MADDIE'S FANCY CORPORATE OFFICE. SHE IS
USHERING A CLIENT OUT THE DOOR.

MADDIE

It's complicated but I think this
may be the best will I've ever drawn
up. I think you'll be very happy
when you drop dead.

THE CLIENT EXITS. MADDIE'S ASSISTANT POPS HER HEAD IN.

ASSISTANT

Your sister is on the phone.

MADDIE

(PICKS UP PHONE) Hello?

INTERCUT WITH:

INT. RETAIL STORE -- CONTINUOUS
(MIA, SALESWOMAN)

MIA

Hey, I'm so busy with work but I'm
dying to know -- what did you think?

MADDIE

Oh my God! Loved him! Four and a
half stars!

MIA

Why not five stars?

MADDIE

(FIRM) Five stars is reserved for Prince William. (THEN) I'll be honest: I went in trying not to be critical, which was a little difficult given certain leather wrist accessories --

MIA

(KNOWS ALL TOO WELL) Please, that Wonder Woman piece of crap is so getting thrown out.

MADDIE

But then I really got him. I like him. Ben likes him too.

MIA

That I got.

WE SEE MIA IN A WIDER SHOT. IT IS NOW CLEAR THAT IS SHE IN FACT SHOPPING. AN UPBEAT SALESWOMAN APPROACHES, CARRYING A DRESS.

SALESWOMAN

Found your size!

MADDIE

Where are you? You said you were working!

MIA

I telecommute, Maddie. I can work from anywhere.

MADDIE

Three years of law school, six years
trying to make partner and yet you
get paid while you shop -- there is
no justice.

MIA

Look, if you didn't want to be tied
to a desk you should have invented
something like me.

MADDIE

(DRIVES HER CRAZY) You didn't invent
anything! You and your friends
just copied the idea of Evite!

MIA

(CORRECTS HER, BY ROTE) Paper Free
Post features stylish custom online
stationery and offers a hip
alternative to first generation
invite websites.

SALESWOMAN

Ooo, that sounds nice.

MIA

Thank you. It is. (THEN, INTO
PHONE) I'm so happy you like Casey.
(MORE)

MIA (cont'd)

I feel much better now that I've gotten your "sister stamp of approval". You'd know how much that meant if you ever asked my opinion about relationship stuff.

MADDIE

Mia, you were fifteen when I started dating Ben. I asked your opinion, you were impressed that he could drive at night. (THEN) But really, really happy for you. Casey seems great.

MIA

And you normally think the guys I date are crazy!

MADDIE

He doesn't seem crazy at all.

JUST THEN CASEY POKES HIS HEAD IN. MADDIE'S ASSISTANT GESTURES, "SHOULD I LET HIM IN?"

MADDIE (cont'd)

(SHOCKED) Oh my God!

CASEY GESTURES THAT SHE SHOULDN'T SAY HE'S THERE.

MIA

What?

MADDIE

(COVERING)

(MORE)

MADDIE (cont'd)

Oh my God, it's 11:34 and nothing happened. Something usually happens at this time but it didn't. Weird, huh? Love ya bye!

SHE HANGS UP AND WAVES CASEY IN. END INTERCUT.

CASEY

Nice work -- you could get a job with the CIA.

MADDIE

Hi!

MADDIE GOES TO GREET CASEY. THERE'S AN AWKWARD BEAT WHERE THEY AREN'T SURE WHETHER TO SHAKE HANDS OR KISS. THEY SETTLE FOR A HALF-HUG.

CASEY

Sorry about that. I didn't want anyone to know I was here. I, uh, want your advice about Mia. See, I want to propose.

MADDIE

Huh. Guess you are crazy.

AND WE...

CUT TO:

SCENE D

INT. MADDIE AND BEN'S APARTMENT - LATER (NIGHT 2)
(BEN, MADDIE, MIA, CASEY)

THEIR LOFT IS AN INVITING, LIGHT-FILLED SPACE WITH A SMALL TERRACE. BEN'S HAVING A BEER. MADDIE ENTERS.

BEN

Hey babe, how was your day?

MADDIE

Well, let's see.... I just got back from ring shopping with Casey.

BEN

Is that to distract from the bracelet?

MADDIE

Engagement ring shopping. He came to my office and wanted my advice on the best way to propose.

BEN

What?!

MADDIE

I know! It's crazy right?!

BEN

Getting married after two months?

What is she, famous?

MADDIE

It makes no sense -- so impulsive.

(SHAKES HEAD) These kids today.

BEN

"These kids today"? You should go
on facebook and update your status
to "old".

MADDIE

I know I said I'd just be supportive,
but I have to step in.

BEN

I don't know... when you butt in...
it only makes her do the opposite.
Remember when she was in college
and you told her not to take that
Spanish class, what did she do?

MADDIE

Major in Spanish.

BEN

And?

MADDIE

Go to Spain for a year.

BEN

And now how does she pronounce the
name of the co-host on "The Today
Show"?

MADDIE

(EXAGGERATED ACCENT, ROLLED R'S)

MerrrrreDith Vie-rrrrra.

BEN

Exactly. How did you leave things
with Casey?

MADDIE

I just tried to stall. I suggested
ideas for the proposal that would
take a while to happen. Like I
said it's always been Mia's dream
to get engaged during the summer
Olympics but unfortunately they
aren't until 2012. Stuff like that.

BEN

(CHUCKLES) That's so lame.

MADDIE

It was not my best work. But I
just needed to buy some time. (THEN)
I have to talk to her. Before
somebody does something rash.

THERE'S A KNOCK. MIA AND CASEY BURST IN, EXCITED.

MIA

Casey just proposed! We're engaged!

BEN

(EXAGGERATED ACCENT) Dios mio.

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

SCENE E

FADE IN:

INT. MADDIE AND BEN'S APARTMENT - LATER (NIGHT 2)
(BEN, CASEY, MADDIE, MIA)

EVERYONE IS AS WE LEFT THEM.

MADDIE

Wow. (TO CASEY, SLIGHTLY ACCUSATORY)
You proposed.

CASEY

I know, I'm sorry. I so appreciated
all your great ideas but I couldn't
wait for "the perfect moment." I
couldn't wait another second.

MADDIE

(FROZEN SMILE) See? The one time
I'm not critical and such wonderful
things happen.

MIA

Do you want to know how he did it?

CASEY

(TO MADDIE) I used your stuff -- I
could re-enact it if you want.

MADDIE

Oh, no, that's really okay.

BEN

(CAN'T HELP HIMSELF) I'd kinda
like to see.

CASEY DROPS TO ONE KNEE. MIA STARTS TO GIGGLE.

CASEY

Mia, baby, I know it is not the
summer Olympics, or an election
year or even a census year.

BEN SHOOTS MADDIE A LOOK. ASHAMED, SHE HANGS HER HEAD.

CASEY (cont'd)

And I don't have a fancy Australian
Opal or the rare Sri Lankan Kadupul
flower that only blooms once every
seven years but I hope you will
take me anyway. I love you and I
can't wait to start our life
together. Will you marry me?

MIA

Yes! (SHE POINTS UP AND DOWN HER
ARM) Third time you did it and I
still got chills. (THEN, TO OTHERS)
I made him do it in the elevator.
(THEN) Isn't this great?

MADDIE

It is just such a surprise!

MIA

Not to you. I know you helped and I can't tell you how much I appreciate that. Though some of your ideas were a little wacky. Why did you say I thought the Olympics and census were romantic?

MADDIE

(INVENTING) 'Cause you're a red-blooded American woman.

MIA

Well, anyway, I'm so glad you're on board. Next up: Mom and Dad. I really want them to like him but I'm nervous. I mean, you know Casey...

MADDIE/BEN

Not really. Nope.

MIA

I mean I love the way he looks at the world, but he can be a bit of a...

CASEY

(UNFAZED) Oddball.

MIA

(GRATEFUL) Yes. (TO BEN)
(MORE)

MIA (cont'd)

I was wondering if you'd consider giving him a few pointers. Coach him a bit? Mom and Dad love you so much.

BEN

Oh, I don't know --

MIA

C'mon, you owe me -- the first summer you visited us at the house we'd rent in Maine? I cleared out of the bedroom so you two could be together. I slept in a rowboat! (MASSAGES AN IMAGINARY PAIN) My neck still hurts.

BEN

Fine. This is the fortieth time you've called in that favor, though.

MIA

(PLAYS IT UP) It was just so cold.

BEN

(TO CASEY) I'm free for breakfast tomorrow.

CASEY

Great. How's three o'clock sound?

BEN

It sounds late. (THEN) How's eight?

CASEY

Ouchie. Two?

BEN

(FIRM) Nine.

CASEY

Okay, dude. But you owe me.

MIA

Thank you, Ben. This is gonna go great -- you work with Casey a little, then tomorrow night we go out to a nice dinner, Maddie says how much she loves him --

MADDIE

Me? How did I get involved?

CASEY

Hey, at least you don't have to wake up at nine for your thing.

BEN

To be clear, we're meeting at nine.

MIA

Maddie you have to come. You want this to go well, right? You like Casey, you're happy for us --

MADDIE

Yeah, about that --

MIA

I need you there. They listen to you -- you're so obviously their favorite.

CASEY

I'm sure that's not true.

BEN/MIA/MADDIE

No, it's true. It is. Yeah.

MADDIE

(DEEP BREATH) Look, I do like Casey, but you might not want me making the case for you --

MIA

You have to. You know how tough they can be.

MADDIE THINKS. SHE GETS AN IDEA.

MADDIE

You're right. They are tough.

(BEAT) I'll be there.

MIA

Really? Yay! Okay! This is exciting! (THEN, TO CASEY) Ooo, we can get started on wedding planning. Gotta pick a date and a dress and I can start designing our email invitations on (POINTED TO MADDIE) my invention!

MADDIE ROLLS HER EYES. MIA AND CASEY AD-LIB GOODBYE'S
AND EXIT.

BEN

What just happened? I thought you
were against this. Now I'm having
two meals tomorrow with this guy.

MADDIE

I'm being supportive.

BEN

(ONTO HER) Nah, that's not it.

MADDIE

Okay, you think I'm critical? She's
telling my parents tomorrow. They're
way more critical than I am. They
once made one of her boyfriends
cry.

BEN

(FONDLY) I miss that guy. He made
me seem tough.

MADDIE

The point is they're gonna raise
all the right objections so I won't
have to. This is perfect -- I make
her happy. My parents tell her
what she's doing is crazy. (THEN,
LESS SURE) They are the crazy ones,
right?

BEN

What do you mean?

MADDIE

It is just... my little sister is...
engaged. It feels a little weird
being leapfrogged by her like this.

BEN

You're the one who said you never
needed to get married.

MADDIE

I didn't. In the beginning we were
too young, then we wanted to get
out of debt, establish our careers,
then all our friends got married,
then all our friends got divorced,
and after a point what we had was
so good, why rock the boat? But I
don't know, are we missing something?

BEN

Look, I love that we wake up every
day and make the decision to be
together -- not because some piece
of paper tells us to. I think it's
very romantic.

HE LEANS IN CLOSE TO HER TO MAKE HIS POINT.

MADDIE

You've got food on your face.

SHE WIPES AWAY A CRUMB.

BEN

No matter what your sister is doing,
what we have is special. Anybody
who knows us, knows we're a great
couple. Everybody is out there
looking for what we have.

MADDIE

I know.

BEN

(THEN) And hey, what we're doing
is very "in" right now. We're like
Brad and Angelina except I don't
have to grow weird facial hair for
my movie roles.

MADDIE

That is the main difference.

AND WE...

CUT TO:

SCENE H

INT. COFFEE SHOP - NEXT DAY (DAY 3)
(BEN, CASEY)

BEN AND CASEY ARE IN A BOOTH.

BEN

Alright, we don't have a lot of
time. I've got a thing at 9:45.

CASEY

(AMAZED) You got two people to
meet you this early?

BEN PRODUCES A PURPLE INDEX CARD FROM HIS JACKET POCKET.

BEN

I have a list of the things you
need to know about the Putneys.
It's gleaned from screw-ups I've
made and a lot of the tragic errors
that I've watched Mia's boyfriends
make over the years. (HANDS HIM
THE CARD) Many good men have died
to bring you this information.

CASEY

(SOMBER) I understand. (LOOKS AT
CARD) Wow, this is a lot of stuff.

BEN

Well, I own a hotel. And it's successful because I'm good at picking up on people's wants and needs. I treat Maddie's parents like a couple of clients. You should do the same. Like, what do you do?

CASEY

I play in an avant garde metal band that has a performance art component.

BEN

(TRYING) So pretend you own a hotel.
(OFF CARD) Let's see... their dad is a huge grammar snob. Try not to end a sentence on a preposition. Do you ever say "comprise" when you mean "compose"?

CASEY

Those aren't really the kind of words I use. (THEN) Hey, does your hotel ever have events where they need a band?

BEN

No. Never. (THEN) Oh, and do yourself a favor. Don't give Mrs. Putney your email address.
(MORE)

BEN (cont'd)

That woman has never met a cutesy email she hasn't forwarded. What else? They'll say you can call them by their first names but they don't mean it. Compliment her scarves -- she considers them her signature accessory. Don't bring up cruises -- they had a bad buffet experience once.

BEN'S BLACKBERRY DINGS. HE CHECKS IT.

BEN (cont'd)

And it's another email from Mrs. Putney. This one is dogs and kids napping together. (CAN'T HELP IT, SMILES) It's actually pretty cute.

HE PUTS THE BLACKBERRY AWAY AND RETURNS TO HIS LECTURE.

BEN (cont'd)

Safe topics are wine, theater and the Yankees. Topics to avoid include the Supreme Court and any movie made after 1960.

CASEY

Wow. This sounds like a lot of work.

BEN

(PLEASED SOMEONE NOTICED) It is!

CASEY

(HANDS INDEX CARD BACK) I think
I'll just be myself and hopefully
they will like me and if not...

BEN

If not, what? What's the end of
that sentence?

CASEY SHRUGS, "WHAT CAN YOU DO?"

BEN (cont'd)

(FASCINATED) You really don't care
if they like you?

CASEY

I mean I hope that's not the case
but what can you do? It doesn't
really affect my life. Mia is the
one I am marrying.

BEN

So you just go through life not
worried about what people think,
not scared of saying the wrong thing?
How do you do that?

CASEY

(SHRUGS) Dunno. Just do.

BEN

If you ever figure it out could you
put it on an index card?

AND WE...

CUT TO:

SCENE J

INT. RESTAURANT - NIGHT (NIGHT 3)
(BEN, CASEY, JOEL, MADDIE, MIA, VICKY)

MADDIE, BEN, MIA AND CASEY ARE AT A TABLE. THERE ARE TWO FREE SEATS BETWEEN MADDIE AND MIA. MIA FIDGETS.

CASEY

(TO MIA) Babe, you seem nervous.

MIA

I just want this to go well. I love you -- I want them to love you, too.

MADDIE

And they probably will. But let's be realistic -- you can't expect everyone to be as supportive as I am.

MIA

When they come, let Mom sit next to you. I want her to be in a good mood.

THE PARENTS, JOEL AND VICKY PUTNEY (50'S-60'S, WELL-GROOMED, A BIT INTIMIDATING) APPROACH.

MIA (cont'd)

Oh God, here they are. (TO CASEY)
(MORE)

MIA (cont'd)

Just be yourself. (BLURTS) But
better! I'm sorry! But I mean it!

MADDIE

(TO BEN, RE: HER MOM) Aw, she's
wearing that scarf you got her.

MIA

(TO BEN) Suck up.

BEN

Jealous.

MIA

(HATES HERSELF) I am!

JOEL AND VICKY ARRIVE AT THE TABLE.

VICKY

Sorry we're late. It took us forever
to get here. Your father is on a
huge walking jag.

JOEL

No, I'm on a huge "not paying for
taxis" jag because our net worth
went on a huge "losing seventy five
percent of itself" jag. And you're
on an "acting like it didn't happen"
jag.

MIA

Well, if it helps dinner is on us
tonight.

VICKY

That's for sure. He's started
"forgetting" his wallet at home.

JOEL

(BAD ACTING, PATS HIMSELF) Oh son
of a gun, you're right. I don't
have it.

MIA

(POINTS) Mom, I thought you'd sit
there.

VICKY

(GIDDY) Next to Maddie!

CASEY

(SOTTO, TO BEN) Wow, you weren't
kidding.

BEN NODS.

MIA

Okay. Mom, Dad, this is Casey.

CASEY GETS UP AND SHAKES THEIR HANDS.

CASEY

Great to meet you, Joel. Victoria.

SURPRISED, THEY SHARE A LOOK. BEN SHAKES HIS HEAD AND
SLIDES HIS PURPLE INDEX CARD OVER TO CASEY.

BEN

(JUMPING IN) Mr. and Mrs. Putney!

JOEL/VICKY

How are you, Ben? Great to see
you.

BEN

Nice to see you getting some use
out of that scarf.

JOEL

It really is beautiful. I was
shocked no one on eBay wanted it.

VICKY

Oh, before I forget, Casey -- let
me get your email. I find it is
the best way to communicate.

CASEY

It is facehumper, one word --

MIA

(JUMPING IN) He doesn't have an
email.

A WAITRESS DELIVERS SOME CHAMPAGNE TO THE TABLE.

VICKY

Oh, this is nice. What's the
occasion?

MIA NUDGES MADDIE FOR HELP.

MADDIE

Um, Mia has news.

MIA TAKES A GLASS AND STANDS TO MAKE HER ANNOUNCEMENT.

VICKY

(GASPS, SUPER-EXCITED) Maddie and
Ben are getting married!

MADDIE

What? Why would that be Mia's news?
That doesn't even make sense!

MIA

Yeah, like I don't have anything of
my own going on?

MADDIE

And all of a sudden you're desperate
for us to get married?

CASEY

Wait, you guys aren't married? Why
not?

BEN

Not the time, buddy.

VICKY

I'm sorry. I guess I misunderstood.

JOEL

Can we please hear the news that I
walked eighty-five blocks for?

MIA

Well, this is not the exact mood I
wanted to strike but I'm getting
married.

VICKY

To who?

JOEL

(CORRECTING) Whom.

CASEY STANDS.

CASEY

To me!

HE HOLDS OUT HIS ARMS FOR A HUG. NO ONE RESPONDS. BEN STANDS AND HUGS HIM.

BEN

(IN THE HUG) Sit down now.

CASEY, BEN AND MIA SIT.

MIA

So that's the news. I am settling
down... man of my dreams... (OFF
THEIR NON-RESPONSE) Thoughts?

MADDIE

(PROMPTING) Pretty crazy, huh?

VICKY AND JOEL LOOK AT EACH OTHER FOR A BEAT. IT IS NOT CLEAR WHICH WAY IT IS GOING TO GO. THEN...

VICKY

It's wonderful.

JOEL

I'm so happy for you, pumpkin.

MIA

Yay!

SHE KISSES CASEY.

MADDIE

(FLOORED) Heh?

VICKY

What a wonderful surprise! You
found love!

MADDIE

(WITH JUDGMENT) Yeah, like last
Tuesday.

MIA

Sis, what are you doing here?

MADDIE

(REELING) Reacting to a shocking
lack of parental... mate-vetting.
Where are the parents who made the
boyfriend cry? This doesn't seem
insanely fast to you?

JOEL

Well, not everyone is gonna wait
fifteen years.

VICKY

(CHUCKLES) Darling, stop.

MADDIE

Is that directed at me?

JOEL

No, it's directed at Kurt Russell
and Goldie Hawn.

THE PARENTS CHUCKLE.

MIA

Hey, guys, this is my moment. I
just got engaged. Make fun of Maddie
when she gets engaged. In 2044.

JOEL AND VICKY LAUGH. CASEY JOINS IN.

MADDIE

You're new -- you don't get to laugh!

VICKY

Don't be so sensitive, dear. We've
come to accept your choices.

MADDIE

I'm sorry is our not being married
something you talk about?

MIA, JOEL AND VICKY NOD.

MADDIE (cont'd)

You've never put any pressure on us
at all.

VICKY

Well, the therapist said --

MADDIE

Therapist? Therapists have been
consulted?!

JOEL

I think we are getting off track.
We're losing sight of the fact that
our little Mia is gonna walk down
the aisle... in what I trust will
be an intimate, modest affair in
keeping with the financial realities
of the day.

MADDIE

Okay, well great. Then let's just
celebrate. (RAISES GLASS) To haste!

BEN

(WARNING) Honey.

MADDIE

I'm sorry but I can't understand why we're being mocked. Call me old-fashioned but I think it's appropriate to apply a little thought before making huge life choices. But you? You get an idea in your head and you need to jump immediately. There's no patience anymore. Everybody needs instant gratification. I blame the internet!

MIA

Where is this coming from? You helped Casey plan the proposal.

MADDIE

I didn't want to be the bad guy but I thought (RE: PARENTS) somebody would have the sense to say this is crazy. I mean you haven't even been together long enough for you to feel comfortable telling him how much his leather bracelet sucks.

CASEY

(HOLDS UP WRIST, INCREDULOUS) This?

BEN

Nah, can't be that one.

MIA

We may not have been together long,
but we know each other.

MADDIE

Really? What's his favorite movie?
Favorite color? Flavor of ice cream?

BEN

Hey, we've been together nine years
and we don't even know stuff like
favorite ice cream.

MADDIE

I absolutely know your favorite ice
cream.

BEN

How? I don't even have a favorite.

MADDIE

Mint chip.

BEN

(REALIZES, AMAZED) It is mint chip.

MIA

This is so insulting. Does it make
you feel better to use your lawyer
logic and grill us like some kind
of (EXAGGERATED ACCENT) Gerrrraldo
Riverrrrra?

CASEY LOOKS AT MIA, "WHERE DID THAT COME FROM?"

MADDIE

(TO CASEY) Yeah, get used to that.

VICKY

Girls, please. We don't fight in
front of company.

MADDIE

"Company"?! You mean my brother-in-
law?!

BEN

Okay, let's just calm down.

MIA

(TO MADDIE, RILED UP) This is what
I want.

MADDIE

So then you have to have it, right
away. Why does it have to be now?

BEN

(FIRM) Honey, stop.

MADDIE

No, I'm sorry, why in the world
does she have to get married right
now?!

BEN

(EXASPERATED BLURT) Because she's
pregnant!

EVERYONE STARES AT BEN. FOR THE GUY WHO IS USUALLY SO
CAREFUL IN FRONT OF THE PUTNEYS, HE'S BLOWN IT BIG TIME.

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

SCENE K

INT. RESTAURANT -- MOMENTS LATER (NIGHT 3)
(BEN, CASEY, JOEL, MADDIE, MIA, VICKY)

EVERYONE IS AS WE LEFT THEM.

VICKY

I can't believe this.

MADDIE

You're pregnant?

MIA

Yes, I'm sorry I didn't mention it
earlier -- I was trying to think of
the perfect way for Ben to say it.

CASEY

Yeah, dude. Maybe put, "Don't blow
the big secret," on your card.

BEN

I don't know what came over me.

MADDIE

(TENTATIVE) Well... this is good
news. Right? Are you happy?

VICKY

I'm ecstatic.

MADDIE

Well, sure. You just loooove
everything.

MIA

Yes, I'm happy! Very happy! Over
the frickin' moon -- (TO CASEY, RE:
BEN) I can't believe you told him!

CASEY

I'm sorry! We were bonding... he
was giving me all this advice... it
was real early in the morning.

JOEL

(TO CASEY) So you knocked up one
daughter (TO BEN) and you won't
marry the other. A couple of princes
here. Does one of you want to hold
me down while the other kicks me in
the stomach?

MIA

Wonderful. (TO CASEY, BEN, MADDIE)
Thank you, and you, and you for
orchestrating this precious moment.

MADDIE

Would I have said anything if I'd
known you were pregnant? Why didn't
you tell me the truth?

MIA

Because I was worried you would be judgmental and not supportive -- exactly how you've been tonight! Of course you didn't really think us getting married so soon was a good idea -- it's not exactly what you've done, so it must be wrong!

CASEY

(TO THE PARENTS) You guys should know, marrying, having a kid... it's all stuff we know we would have done eventually. This just speeds things up a little.

JOEL

(SOFTENING) Well, if there's one thing our reversals of the last year have taught us, it's that life is short, and you should grab all the joy you can find when you find it. That and how depressing powdered milk tastes.

VICKY

And this truly is joyous. There's so much to look forward to. I wanna talk about the wedding and (MELTS) a grandchild! Maddie, switch seats so Mia can sit next to me.

CASEY

(SOTTO, TO BEN) That seems major.

BEN

(SOTTO) Huge. Never happened.

MIA

(STILL UPSET) You know what, mom?
Another time. (POINTED) Maybe
someplace where I'm not feeling so
judged.

SHE GETS UP AND HEADS FOR THE EXIT.

CASEY

Do I follow?

THE OTHERS

Yes.

CASEY CROSSES OFF AFTER MIA.

MADDIE

(STANDS) Well, I guess we should --

BEN STANDS AS WELL.

JOEL

Sorry, kids, but we still haven't
ironed out the matter of the bill.

ANNOYED, MADDIE DROPS SOME CASH ON THE TABLE.

JOEL (cont'd)

(COUNTS MONEY, TO VICKY) Ooo, I
think we'll be able to take the
subway home!

MADDIE AND BEN HEAD OUT AND WE...

CUT TO:

SCENE M

INT. TAXICAB - LATER (NIGHT 3)
(BEN, CASEY, MADDIE, MIA)

BEN IS IN THE FRONT SEAT OF A CAB. CASEY IS IN THE BACK, SANDWICHED BETWEEN THE TWO SISTERS WHO STARE OUT THEIR RESPECTIVE WINDOWS, NOT TALKING.

CASEY

Wow, this is tense.

NO ONE RESPONDS.

CASEY (cont'd)

Sometimes when you say "this is tense" it breaks the tension. (BEAT)
But clearly not in this case.

ANOTHER BEAT.

MIA

(STARTLED GASP) Ahhh! The baby just kicked!

CASEY/BEN/MADDIE

Oh my God! What? Really?!

BEN

Has that ever happened before?

MIA

No, it's the first time.

MADDIE

(BREAKING DOWN) It's because you're upset with me -- I did this. (TO BELLY) I'm sorry, baby. I'm not usually like this. I just felt so attacked -- everyone was judging our relationship and I had no idea and I'm no longer the favorite which of course doesn't matter but sadly does. Don't judge me, baby. I need you on my side.

SHE LOOKS AT MIA.

MADDIE (cont'd)

I'm so sorry I ruined your big night. Who am I to say what's right for you? I clearly don't know anything.

MIA

That's not true. You're very smart.

MADDIE

(WEEPY) I just test well. (THEN) I think part of it is -- it feels weird you doing something first. I normally blaze the trail for you. I'm your big sister. That's my job.

MIA

But you've done that -- what you
two have -- that's what I've wanted
for years.

A BEAT AS MADDIE ABSORBS THIS.

MADDIE

Can I...?

SHE REACHES ACROSS AND PUTS HER HAND ON MIA'S STOMACH.

MIA

(SHEEPISH) Yeah, I lied. It's way
too soon to feel the baby kick. I
was just trying to stop the fight.
You're just touching my Spanx.

MADDIE

(IMPRESSED) Manipulative but
effective.

MIA

Be honest with me. Having all this
happen at once -- a marriage, a
baby -- do you think I'm making a
mistake?

MADDIE

I think one of the best things about
you is that you are fearless. You
just go for it. I wish I could be
more like that instead over-analyzing
every decision to death. (THEN)
Do you think I am making a mistake?

MIA

(VERY TOUCHED) You want my opinion?
Oh my God -- I've dreamed of this
day. You want to know what I think!

MADDIE

So what do you think?

MIA

(STILL THRILLED) No idea!

MADDIE

You know we never got to eat. Wanna
grab some food and we can talk about
your wedding dress?

MIA

Fun! I would love that. I think
I'll probably just end up altering
mom's dress. (OFF HER FACE) What?
You look judgmental again. You
hate that idea?

MADDIE

No, I love it. That's why I always
said if I got married that's what I
would wear.

IT GETS TENSE AGAIN.

CASEY

Oh, we were so close. (GETS AN
IDEA, HAND ON MIA'S STOMACH) Hey,
I think the baby's kicking again.

FADE OUT.

SCENE P

TAG

FADE IN:

INT. MADDIE AND BEN'S APARTMENT - LATER
(BEN, MADDIE)

MADDIE AND BEN ARE SNUGGLING ON THE COUCH, WATCHING TV.

BEN

You know what I realized tonight?
You say the wrong thing, it's not
the end of the world. Maybe in the
future I worry a little less about
offending your parents. (PATS
HIMSELF) I think I can throw out
that stupid -- (HIS FACE DRAINS OF
COLOR) Oh no.

CUT TO:

INT. RESTAURANT - EARLIER THAT NIGHT
(JOEL, VICKY)

VICKY AND JOEL GLARE AT BEN'S PURPLE INDEX CARD.

JOEL

(READING) He thinks he's funny?

VICKY

(READING) She's a little bit racist?

FADE OUT.

END OF SHOW